All Glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga

Heart and Halo

by

His Divine Grace

Swāmī B.R. Śrīdhar

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Compiled by
Swāmī B. S. Tridaṇḍī

Edited by
Śrīpad B. P. Janārdan Mahārāj

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His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh
Śrī Dhām Nabadwīp

Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Gāndharvā-Govindasundarjīu
Nabadwīp Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh

Foreward

It is a privilege and a great fortune once again to be able to present more nectarean words from the lips of His Divine Grace Oṁ Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj to the English-speaking public. It is hoped that these words will find their way into the hearts of all good souls, as well as enliven the practitioners on the path of *bhakti.* Some people like to read a book out of curiosity, others with keen interest but a critical eye, whilst others again intend to profit by the fruit of their study, and it is this class we mainly appeal to in the present work. The successful reception worldwide of our previous publication *The Golden Staircase* has encouraged us in this attempt. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj writes in his *Śrī Śrī Prapanna-jīvanāmṛtam (1.8):*

yakthoktā rūpa-pādena, nīcenotpādite 'nale
hemnaḥ śuddhis tathaivātra, virahārtti-hṛtiḥ satām

"As Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmīpād has in his humility expressed that gold can be purified with fire lit by a barbarian, similarly the pure devotee's grief born

of separation from the Lord may also be dispelled by this book."

The words of Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj are already living in the hearts and homes of many, many people in the world today, in the form of books, and audio and video cassettes. The sweet vibration of his *kīrtana* in the form of *Hari-kathā* continues to expand to the limits of the universe. Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj was once described as a "man of eternal mind"—such was the feeling of those persons fortunate enough to hear him speak about the spiritual world. The preciseness of his representation of *siddhānta* (devotional conclusions), the clarity of his theological and ontological analysis , the startling effectiveness and simplicity of his analogies, along with the extraordinary combination of gravity and, at times, child-like simplicity, marked him as truly unique. One felt he was the most genuine person one could ever meet. His own Guru- Mahārāj Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhakura referred to him as "a man of substance." Small wonder then that devotees from far and wide would seek him out for his reliable and final judgment on any matter of importance. Even many of those who were placed in 'opposition' to him eventually could not help but

be charmed. When he himself once inquired from one such gentleman as to why, even while maintaining this frame of mind, he still continued to visit him regularly, the man replied: "Because of your deep intelligence, sound common sense and disinterested nature."

The present selection is from informal talks recorded at the Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh between 1982–85. The title of the book *Heart and Halo* is Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj's own sweet expression to describe the *bhāva* and *kānti* of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the supreme predominated moiety, consort of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Krishna. Once when His Divine Grace was searching for a fitting expression to describe Her inner and outer qualities, the devotees attending his talk at the time attempted to provide suitable expressions: "mood and luster," "feeling and effulgence," and several other such versions were put forward, but each time Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj shook his head, unsatisfied. Suddenly, with a smile lighting up his countenance, he looked up and said sweetly: "Heart and Halo."

Especially we offer our daṇḍavat pranams to His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, the beloved successor of Śrīla

Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj and present President-Āchārya of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, worldwide. Under his shelter, affection and inspiration, a new generation of devotees are blossoming. May this generation go forth into the world carrying the eternal message of Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj to all corners.

We would like to personally express our gratitude to all those who have helped this work through its various stages to completion, especially: Śrīpad B. A. Sagar Mahārāj, Śrīpad B. P. Janārdan Mahārāj, Śrīpad B.C. Pārvat Mahārāj, Śrī Śrutaśrava Prabhu, Śrī Sārvabhāvana Prabhu, Śrī Navadwīp Prabhu, Śrī Jagadbandhu Prabhu, Śrī Aditi-nandan Prabhu, Śrī Lalitā Charaṇa Prabhu, Śrī Narahari Prabhu, Śrīmatī Swarnangi devī dāsī, Śrīmatī Anupamā devī dāsī, Śrīmatī Sītā devī dāsī, Śrīmatī Tilaka devī dāsī and Śrīmatī Dikṣāvatī devī dāsī.

We apologize if any mistakes of any kind remain in this work despite every effort to eradicate them.

Hare Krishna
Swāmī B. S. Tridaṇḍī
Saphala Ekadāśī
December 18, 1995

PART ONE

The Soul And The Supreme Shelter

The Key Is In Your Own Hand

There is consciousness of the higher, the subjective world, and consciousness of the lower, objective world. Connection with the lower objective world binds us with misery, and relationship with the superior consciousness lifts us up, gives us real fortune. One result is from dedication, and another is from enjoyment. In a word: enjoyment is bad, and devotion is good. On the side of devotion is the Lord, and on that of enjoyment, misery. "There are so many things to be enjoyed": this is fascination with hell, with reaction.

bhaktis tvayi sthiratarā bhagavan yadi syād
daivena naḥ phalati divya-kiśora-mūrtiḥ
muktiḥ svayaṁ mukulitāñjali sevate 'smān
dharmārtha-kāma-gatayaḥ samaya-pratīkṣāḥ

(Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta 107)

In his *Krishna-karṇāmṛta,* Bilvamangala Thākura says: "*bhaktis tvayi sthiratarā bhagavan yadi syāt*, My Lord, if my dedication, my veneration to You is permanent, is in a settled stage, *daivena naḥ phalati divya-kiśora-mūrtiḥ*, and if it reaches to such a height that we can find *divya-kiśora-mūrttiḥ*, a young pair engaged in that highest pastime—if we can reach so far, to find out the eternal pastimes of the Divine Couple, if we can reach to this extent—then we will find, *muktiḥ svayaṁ mukulitāñjali sevate 'smān,* oh, the facility of liberation, emancipation, with folded palms will come to serve us in any way we like. And, *dharmmārtha-kāma-gatayaḥ srāmaya-pratīkṣāḥ*: *dharma,* the results of dutifulness; *artha,* moneymaking; and *kāma,* the objects of sense perception—they are all ready and waiting outside, and whenever a call comes they will come in front of us, 'What do you want, my master, my lord?' That will be our position: *dharma, artha* and *kāma* will wait outside, and whenever we call them they will present themselves: 'What do you want me to do?' And *mukti,* liberation, will be always moving around us with folded palms doing service of different types, if in our fortune we can rise up to such a height as to find that Divine Couple engaged in happy pastimes."

Bilvamaṇgala Thākura showed in his life a peculiar example: how from the house of the prostitute he went straight to Vṛndāvan and got the grace of the Supreme Entity; how in his life he was so much engrossed in, almost swallowed by, sensualism of the lowest type; and from that position, in a single life he could raise himself to the highest stage of realization of the Beautiful.

Mahāprabhu took two books from South India; one was *Brahma-saṁhitā*, and the other was *Krishna-karnāmṛta*. *Krishna-karnāmṛta* is about the pastimes of Vṛndāvan, and *Brahma-saṁhitā* shows the ontological basis of the Absolute, how the Lord of Vṛndāvan is the highest conception of Reality.

Krishna-līlā is not a matter of history. In history events occur, they happen once and can't reoccur at any time. It is an eternal flow in which what is going on in the past never comes again. There is an expression "history repeats itself," but that is in the similar nature of the event, not the actual fact; history repeats its nature, but what is gone, is gone. Once it has gone, it has gone forever. But in *Krishna-līlā*, in the eternal world, it is not so. It may present the same thing every time, at every second; thus it is called *nitya-līlā*, 'eternal pastimes'—crossing the

limitation, the jurisdiction of history. In history, what is past is dead. But the pastimes of the Lord are eternal, *nitya*, always present. Every *līlā* is eternally present; He can show Himself in His eternal forms simultaneously. So in His past, present and future, all events are simultaneously occurring. When He enters the arena of Kaṁsa, different groups are seeing Him in different ways. What is seen by one section of people is seen differently by another, according to their own nature. Even the blind can see Him if He wills. If He wills to show Himself to anyone, though blind one can see Him clearly, because these eyes of flesh are not necessary to see Him. By His willpower alone He can reveal Himself to any person. That was the case with Dhṛtarāṣṭra in the *Kuru-śabha*. Dhṛtarāṣṭra said, "For the time being, my Lord, restore my eyesight so that I can see Your wonderful form which the others are seeing and praising. You can do anything, so only for the time being remove my blindness."

"It is not necessary to remove your blindness, Dhṛtarāṣṭra! I say 'You see Me' and you will see Me." And by His order, Dhṛtarāṣṭra saw! His order, His wish is everything. His simple will is everything, the cause of all existence.

The Kurus wanted to see Draupadī naked, but Draupadī's appeal reached Him and He sanctioned cloth, and that cloth became infinite, of infinite character. As much cloth as they removed, so much cloth remained. It is the will, the *vicāra*, which is everything. Such great potency of such high quality is in the Prime Cause. We are accustomed to think: "This is good, this is bad," and "this is possible, this is impossible." We are accustomed to such considerations within our rules of thought. But these rules do not apply in His case. All of our experience will fail to occupy even a very negligible part of His Kingdom.

He is wonderful. In the example of Vamanāvatāra it is told of His 'wonderful stride,' *adbutkrama*. With one stride He covered the whole earth, and with the next He captured the whole of heaven. He then needed a place to put His third step, but where? He is *adbutkrāma*, He of wonderful stride; all His steps are wonderful. He is wonder, the source of all wonder to our tiny brain. He is here, He is also everywhere. With His full representation He is everywhere; yet He is nowhere! Everything is in Him, and nothing is in Him! Krishna said, "Try to understand My peculiar position, Arjuna." He is the Mystery of all mysteries. Even our own soul is astonishing to our worldly experience:

āścaryavat paśyati kaścid enam
āścaryavad vadati tathaiva cānyaḥ
āścaryavac cainam anyaḥ śṛṇoti
śrutvāpy enaṁ veda na caiva kaścit

(Bhagavad-gītā 2.29)

We do not even know the extraordinary nature of our own self. It is of a very high order, but our attention is focused towards so many mortal things; we have been introduced to, and captured by, the meanest aspect of the world. This is the consequence of the mood of enjoyment. We want to enjoy, we want to exploit. A good exploiter is a king to us! But exploitation in itself is degrading, very mean and low. It takes us to the lowest position and makes us victims of a great reaction.

Exploitation and enjoyment: we are in the midst of them and do not know anything but enjoyment. We want to understand anything and everything in terms of enjoyment; we are in such a filthy, degraded position. Only, 'enjoyment, enjoyment'—that is exploitation. But to exploit is the meanest type of nature, it is hateful, and we must get out of the clutches of that ghost of exploitation. And there is another ghost: renunciation, idleness. But the noble thing is dedication, a dedicated life.

There are two ghosts, one of renunciation and the other of exploitation, and we have to get out of that nightmare, that mania, which is based on our tendency of measuring things to be good and bad. In exploitation there is division into regular and irregular, or *dharma* and *adharma*.

And then renunciation. So many great stalwarts of that conception recommend a complete cessation of the dynamic life. A dead stop! But that should not be the prospect of any conscious man. A dead stop to life: is that any goal of life for the saner section?

A life of nobility, a life of dedication—and not only ordinary dedication for the environment, but dedication for the highest good—is the highest form of life. In the lower stage that dedication is calculative; in the higher stage, spontaneous, automatic. And really, there is joy. Joy is there in quality and quantity; in every way, real life is there. Life is there, and here is the worst shadow, the perverted reflection. And we are told, *uddhared ātmanātmānam,* the key is in our own hand, the freedom by which we can associate with anything, good or bad, and reap the result accordingly.

Ultimately, we are told that the key is in our own hand; none else is to be blamed for our present

condition. But there is always the possibility of noble help being extended to us, and we must accept that. Our past actions also influence us a great deal—whether they were good, bad, or of the eternal aspiration, *sukṛti*. But ultimately the possibility of free action is not taken away from us at any stage; even if we are reduced to the level of taking birth as a tree, there also, the freedom is within. It is hard to think that a tree has got independence, free will, but it is there, in a suppressed position. Freedom is within us also, and we may try as far as possible to understand how it is so, but our freedom is also covered by so many conditions that we may think we are not free but are forced by circumstances. But still, we are free for our selection of any path, good or bad. Our existence is very small and so our freedom is also small and meager, but it is there. Though almost negligible, it exists.

Journey to the Center

Generally, if all our activity is stopped by unfavorable weather, we think "This is very bad!" We are men of action, men who exploit the environment and nature for gathering some energy. We are always trying to collect some energy for our use. That is our nature. The very nature of those who live in this mortal world is to collect more and more energy and wealth that can be utilized in a time of need. If there is any hindrance to that end we think it is a very bad circumstance, in opposition to the object of our life. But to remind us about the importance of our inner wealth, we are advised that the outer nature cannot do us so much harm as can our internal nature, that is, our apathy to collect more wealth for the inner existence, the inner self. Be mindful of that!

Losing things of this mortal world is not bad; it is all coming and going. The body itself, the center of all this activity, will also vanish. Then what is the necessity of collecting so much energy for the bodily

connection? So, awaken your soul, the real person within; search him out and try to help him. That is possible only with help from the *sadhu*.

The day in which we do not find any saint, or have any discussion about the real purpose of life, the inner life, the inner substance, that day we are the loser. Be conscious of that. In all respects, in any way possible, mind your own lesson, mind your own interest, find your own self. Be unmindful towards the external world and circumstances and dive deep into the reality, the inner world. Find your inner self and the inner world where you live, where your inner self is living. Try to find your Home, to go back to God, back to Home. Your energy must be utilized for going Home, and not for wandering in the other land, the land of death. Try to avoid the land of death at any cost; always try to find the eternal soil, that soil to which you belong. Try to understand what is your Home and why it is your Home. Home comfort: what does it mean? It means our birthplace—the place where we are born.

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* we find this verse:

satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ

taj-joṣaṇād āśvapavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.25.25)

"In the association of pure devotees, discussions about Me are very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. Such talks, which are full of spiritual potency, are a source of sweetness, and by such cultivation the path of liberation from worldly life quickly opens. Then gradually one attains firm faith, which in due course develops into taste, and then real love for Me."

This was spoken by the incarnation of the Lord, Śrī Kapiladeva, to his mother, Devahūti, in response to her inquiry as to what is the real goal of life and how to attain it. It came about in this way. Devahūti was married to the sage, Kardama-ṛṣi. After passing some years in the enjoyment of married life, Devahūti conceived a child in her womb from the *ṛṣi*. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says: *prajanaś cāsmi kandarpaḥ*, "Of Cupids, I am He who ensures progeny." And elsewhere it is said, *prajanāya na rataye*, married life is not meant for enjoyment, but for the purpose of producing good progeny. So, when the objective of their marriage was achieved, the *ṛṣi* proposed that he retire from

married life. He told Devahūti, "You have a child in your womb and it is not an ordinary child; the Lord Himself is coming. So I am going to live alone for my own higher purpose of life." Then Devahūti said, "I have such a good partner; I am fortunate to have a saint like you as my husband, but I did not take advantage of your noble personality to learn anything about *brahma*, about the Lord, about my inner life's necessity and its fulfillment. I did not inquire about that. I was only busy to serve you, to satisfy your desires. Though I had such a noble companion, I did not utilize my fortune. Now I pray that you may stay for some time and teach me, help me in spiritual life, and then you may go."

Kardama-ṛṣi said, "You will get help from your son. It is the Lord Himself who is coming, not an ordinary child. Remember this, and in time you will receive that spiritual help from Him. So I won't stay; I shall go now." He departed, but soon the child appeared and He was brought up by Devahūti. Because of her great motherly affection, however, as her son grew, she gradually forgot what her husband had revealed: that He was not an ordinary child.

In the course of time, when the boy had grown and was one day absorbed, Devahūti was reminded, "Oh, the mood of my child does not seem to be ordinary." She could understand that He was engaged in deep thought, and considered: "His father foretold that the Lord would appear through me, and now I see it is true. My son's mood does not seem to be worldly, but it is from above. His mind is absorbed in transcendental thought."

She then slowly approached Him: "Child, your father told me that You are not an ordinary boy of this world. You are divine. I wanted some spiritual advice from him, but he told me that You would advise me. For so long I did not heed that, but today Your mood is encouraging me; it is reminding me of those words of Your father and encouraging me to approach You for spiritual advice. Be pleased to advise me about what is spiritual truth. Who am I? What is this world? How can I find the proper direction of life? Who is the owner of this world, and what is my duty towards Him? You are not an ordinary boy, so I want to know all these things from You, my child." Then from the lips of her son came this verse, given in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśvapavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.25.25)

Lord Kapila said, *satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido*, "Talks about Me which are full of potency can only be found coming from the lips of My devotees. Not only lip-deep words, but words that have got depth, spirit, power, that represent Reality come from the lips of My real devotee. Such words are not shallow, but are surcharged with spirit, with life, and can enliven us. *Bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathaḥ*, they satisfy both our ear and our heart and give a taste of spiritual joy, *rasāyanāḥ*. Their words are surcharged with the ecstasy of the spiritual world, and color our ear, our mind, and our heart—physically, mentally, and also on the plane of our soul. *Taj-joṣaṇād*, by hearing from the real source, from that real *sadhu*, *āśvarpavarga-vartmani*, we are led towards relief from this worldly life. By a gradual process, we attain these things: *śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*, first, *śraddhā*, ever increasing faith; then *rati*, slight taste; then we get real love, *bhakti*.

By *anukramiṣyati*, a gradual process, we are taken towards the higher domain."

In this way the boy began to advise His mother, Devahūti. This Devahūti-nandana, Kapila, was the son of Kardama-ṛṣi, but there was another Kapila whose *sāṅkhya* philosophy does not recognize God; it only analyzes the material elements, gradually eliminating everything of spiritual substance. So there are two Kapilas, both of whom gave *sāṅkhya* philosophy*: the divine son of Kardama-ṛṣi (Kardama Kapila) and the other, Sāṅkhyaka Kapila. Kapila, the son of Kardama and Devahūti, gave what is known as *sāṅkhya*, but He has given recognition to the Supreme Lord, Īśvara, whereas the atheist Kapila claimed *Īśvara-asiddhe*, there is no necessity of any God to explain the existence of this world. That is his conclusion. The *nyāyikas* (logicians) say that there must be One who has created this world. This world has been created, so there must be someone who has done it. Their highest conclusion is that there must be a creator, and He is God, Īśvara. But the atheistic Kapila says, "No, there is no necessity of any God to explain the existence of this material world: *Īśvara-asiddhe*. His finding, his

*_sāṅkhya_: to enumerate or count.

conclusion, is that there is no necessity of a creator; automatically everything exists. Only two things are necessary: first, a particle of spirit, and second, matter. Matter and spirit combined, *śiva* and *śakti*, have created this world. There are so many spiritual particles, like specks of sand or dust, and by their combination with matter this world is going on automatically.

Once, while at the Madras Maṭh, I met a gentleman from Madhupur who was a follower of this school of thought. He was an educated Bengali gentleman, and I asked him, "What have you got from your guru, that Kapila?"

He said "So many souls are there, *yata jīva*, and everyone is a *śiva*, independent of this matter."

I said, "You are satisfied with this explanation?"

"Yes, I am satisfied: *pāśa baddhaḥ bhavet jīvaḥ, pāśa muktaḥ sadā śivaḥ* (the soul while conditioned is *jīva*, when liberated is *śiva*)."

I told him: "Where your philosophy ends, our philosophy, that of the *Bhāgavata* school, begins."

"How is it so?" that gentleman asked.

"You will have to explain where these *śivas* exist. There are so many *śivas*, like particles of spiritual dust; but should we not think they must be living in

some position, and that there must exist some relationship between them? There are so many, and some sort of relationship must be there between them, and they must also stay somewhere, in some position, some plane. And how are they harmonized together, or are they each an independent unit, all fighting with one another? If not, then what is their nature? The *Bhāgavata* has come to explain about the *mukta-jīvas*, the liberated souls. These souls, who were once diseased, are now free from that disease. In their healthy condition, what do they do? What is their position, their characteristic, their nature, their object, their pastimes? We have to know that. So, *Bhāgavatam* has given us an explanation."

Devarṣi Nārada asked Vyāsadeva, "Explain what is the normal, natural condition of the liberated souls who are not diseased." And that has been given. There is a Center, and all function in connection with Him and are all harmonized together.

In *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says:

yat sāṅkhyaiḥ prāpyate stānaṁ
tad yogair api gamyate
ekaṁ sāṅkhyaṁ ca yogaṁ ca
yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati

(Bhagavad-gītā 5.5)

"He has true vision who can see that the *sāṅkhya* and yoga systems are one and the same." One person is trying to reach the ultimate goal by external elimination, and the other by internal elimination: "this is body, this is mind, this is soul (*ātma*), then supersoul (*paramātma*)," and onwards. The search is all within. The process of elimination is within. And by that he is trying to reach the core. And the other, by elimination of the elements of the external world (earth, water, fire, air, ether) is trying to understand the Origin.

That is *sāṅkhya: neti, neti, neti,* "This is not it, this is not it; this is dependent, this is also dependent; this is not original, nor this, nor this. All are effects. Then what is the Cause?" To inquire through the external process is *sāṅkhya*, and the internal process is through yoga—*prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhyāna, dhāraṇā, samādhi*.* So by elimination of the effect we come in contact with the cause; from the gross we start towards the subtle, and we reach more and more subtle planes in the causal direction.

This is the process in both *sāṅkhya* and yoga. But in the beginning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,

* breath-control, withdrawing the senses from their objects, concentration, meditation, full absorption and trance.

Śukadeva Goswāmī, who is speaking to Parikṣit Mahārāj, begins his talk by saying that these two, *sāṅkhya* and yoga, and also *sva-dharma pariniṣṭhayā* (fulfilling one's Vedic duty), can all give us liberation, but there is something more:

etāvān sāṅkhya-yogābhyāṁ sva-dharma-pariniṣṭhayā
janma lābhaḥ paraḥ puṁsām ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.1.6)

He says, *etāvān,* so far, by these processes, we are told our liberation may be achieved: by *sāṅkhya*, external elimination; by yoga, internal elimination; and also by *sva-dharma pariniṣṭayā*, discharging one's duty as it is recommended in the Veda. To perform whatever is one's respective duty as it is recommended, without any special aim or object, is *niṣkāma* (action free from personal desire). Because it has been advised by the *sāstra* as my duty in my present position, I am doing it, but in a disinterested way, without any special end. As a *brāhmaṇa*, I am told, "You must do these things," so I am doing them. As a *kṣatriya*, my duty is to keep the peace and control the evil-doers; that is my duty and I am doing it. As a *vaiśya,* I am advised to do such and such. Because it is advised in the *sāstra*, I

am doing my respective duty in a disinterested way, that is, without any special aim or interest. All these three processes—*sāṅkhya*, yoga and Vedic duty—lead us to liberation (*mukti*). But, *janma lābhaḥ paraḥ puṁsām ante nārāyaṇa smṛtiḥ*, after we get relief from the external bondage, the fulfillment of life is in remembering our Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Creator, and our relationship with Him. We must get out of the net we are entangled in, and after getting release from this entanglement we must search out our proper relationship with the Prime Cause. Who are we in our relationship with Him? Here the *Bhāgavata* begins:

etāvān sāṅkhya-yogābhyāṁ sva-dharma-pariniṣṭhayā
janma lābhaḥ paraḥ puṁsām ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.1.6)

Janma-lābhaḥ means fulfillment of our existence, our birth; *lābhaḥ* means the gain, the fulfillment, the end. What is that? *Ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ*, our connection, our reconnection with the Center, the all-harmonizing Center, that should be our goal, and the *Bhāgavatam* comes to tell us this. So many other *śāstras* come to give us release from this external bondage; but with internal progress, after

crossing the marginal plane, we get admission into the *paravyoma*, the special area, *Vaikuṇṭha*. That is, we get the visa: *'virajā', 'brahmaloka' bhedi' 'para-vyoma' pāya*. We catch the flow of the current going towards the Center; that is the visa. *Sāṅkhya*, yoga and *sva-dharma parinisṭḥayā* can give us the passport to get out of the land where we are living, but after that, if we want to attain something, then a visa is necessary.

The Real Judgment of Love

According to Indian medical authorities, in the body is air, bile and mucus, which correspond to air, fire, and water, three elements in the ether that influence the earth. Earth is mainly influenced by water, and water by heat, heat by air, and all are fighting, struggling within ether. This is the nature of the material world. Then there is the mental world, the manifestation of the mental energy: "I want this, I do not want that; I like this, I don't like that." And, the intelligence gives direction to the mind: "Don't take this, take that." But it is all within the *ahaṅkāra,* material ego. Above that is the soul, who experiences everything, good or bad. He is called *puruṣa*:

puruṣaḥ sukha-duḥkhānāṁ, bhoktṛtve hetur ucyate

(Bhagavad-gītā 13.21)

"It is established that it is the conditioned living being, *puruṣa* himself who is the responsible cause

of the feelings of joy and sorrow which he experiences in this world."

This is the difference between spirit and matter. Matter, called *prakṛti*, is energy, but the soul, *puruṣa*, experiences good and bad; he is the person who feels good or bad, sorrow or happiness. He is of one substance, and that which is felt is of another:

kārya-kāraṇa-kartṛtve, hetuḥ prakṛtir ucyate

(Bhagavad-gītā 13.21)

"Certainly in this impermanent world all movement occurs through the inherent quality of the predominated material nature, *prakṛti,* which is responsible for both cause (the force of the senses) and effect (the material body)."

So all the activity we find here, all movement, is due to that material energy, and the feeler of everything, the knower, the conceiver, is the soul. The soul is like the eye, an eye seeing anything and everything.

In *sāṅkhya* philosophy, this *prakṛti-puruṣa* relationship has been compared to that of a blind man and a crippled man. A crippled man may ride on the shoulder of a blind man. He who is moving (*prakṛti*), is blind; and he who is crippled, who is on

his shoulder (*puruṣa*), has got eyes to see and can guide. The soul is 'crippled'; he cannot move, but he can see. The blind man is the commander of the energy, who can move here and there; he can carry, but he is blind. In this way, soul is the knower, the feeler, the subjective existence, and the energetic aspect is that of the force, *prakṛti*. So, there is force and consciousness.

We are so much engrossed with force; we only require the force, the energy, and we have forgotten that we are the feeler of that force! That "feeler" is astonishing; if we try to understand our own self, we will be dumfounded: "Oh, what is this? I am of such a nature! I have nothing to do with this world of mortality; I can live independently of this mortal world? Is it so?"

Then we will be able to understand further, that there is Supersoul. In the material world there are so many different planes: the world of heat, that of water, of air. Everything is evolving from a more subtle plane down to gross things, like stone or wood. Just as there is development in this direction in the material world, so in the subjective world there is also development, but upwards, from the soul to Supersoul, to Super-Supersoul; in this way

there is development and it is infinite. And we are *tatasṭha*, marginal; our soul is in the marginal position, between higher and lower, between the subtle side and the gross side. The upper side is eternal, it is *sat-cit-ānandam*, eternal, conscious and happy; and here: *asat, acit, nirānanda*. It is *asat*, flickering, every minute it is dying; and *acit*, unconscious; and *nirānanda*, with no feeling of joy or happiness. These are the respective natures of *this* world, and of *that* world. And if we want to have association with that world, we are told that in the highest position there is infinite beauty, love, and ecstasy. That world can come down to us, and we can be taken in as one of the Lord's own family members. We can live as a family member with the highest Entity of that world! Mahāprabhu told us it is possible, but only through affection, and not by knowledge or any mystic realization. By affection and love we can attract Him in such a way that we can be given recognition as a family member, a position very near to Him—to such an extent it is possible.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says:

tato māṁ tattvato jñātvā, viśate tad anantaram

(Bhagavad-gītā 18.55)

"After realizing My proper position, they enter there; that is, into My own special jurisdiction, into My family." And the *Bhāgavatam* says:

mamātma-bhūyāya ca kalpate vai
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.29.34)

"They get such high recognition which qualifies them to live with Me eternally, as My own. If they selflessly come forward to satisfy Me, leaving aside everything, *ananya bhajana*, if they want Me alone and nothing else, then such is their future prospect."

marttyo yadā tyakta-samasta-karmā
niveditātmā vicikīrṣito me
tadāmṛtatvaṁ pratipadyamāno
mamātma-bhūyāya ca kalpate vai
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.29.34)

Sanātana Goswāmī has analyzed what is the proper meaning of this expression *ātma-bhūyāya:* "My own," they become "My own." What is the meaning of "own"? He says it means to enter into His family; and "family" means there is gradation: the servant; the friends and their associates, the filial affection group; the guardian group; and then the highest group, that of consorthood.

There is one story I heard from my godbrother Vaikānasa Mahārāj, who was a *brāhmaṇa* scholar of Orissa, about an incident which occurred in recent history, in connection with the Jagannātha Temple at Puri, where it was customary that no *khechurānna* (*kitri*) used to be offered to the Lord.

Once there was a raid by the Mohammedans on Orissa, and one of the girls of the royal family was abducted for the pleasure of the Mohammedan general, by his soldiers. He later left the state, but that girl was left on the outskirts of some village or town, and there she gave birth to a child who was a great devotee. It was a very peculiar thing; the girl was also a devotee, but somehow she had to undergo such a horrible experience. She gave birth to a child and he lived on the outskirts of that town. When he grew up he used to cook *kitri*, that is, rice and beans cooked together, boiled into a half-liquid consistency, and he used to offer that to Jagannātha from afar. By dint of his devotion, Jagannātha had to go there and accept that *kitri* offering.

One day the boy was perhaps late in his offering; Jagannātha took the *kitri* but the time was then late for the temple offering, so He had to run back to install Himself in His position in the temple, and a

particle of that *kitri* was on His lips. The *pāṇḍās*, the *pujāris* (the priestly class) noticed: "What is this? How has this happened? We can detect this is not the proper offering to Jagannātha; then how is it here on His lips?" So it was referred to the leader of the *pāṇḍās* and he also searched, but he could not ascertain the cause. Then it was taken to the king and he also investigated it, "Who has taken this food and smeared it on the mouth of Jagannātha?"

Finally the priest who had been in charge at the time of the offering of food in the temple was apprehended: "You are responsible! You were in charge of the temple at the time of Jagannātha's offering, then how has this impure thing come in His mouth? You must explain or you will be punished." The man was innocent and he said, "I do not know anything; I do not know anything!"

Then, when he was about to be punished, Jagannātha came in a dream to the king as well as to the leading priest: "That man is innocent; don't disturb him. On the outskirts of the town is My devotee. He offered that food to Me, and I ate it, but the time was late and I had to hurry back to occupy My position in the temple, so My mouth was not cleansed. This is the name of that boy. He is living there; he is My devotee,

and I have taken this food there." And it was as a result of the Mohammedan's exploitation of the princess that this devotee appeared. So, Krishna-*bhakti*, devotion to Krishna, does not care for the formality of purity or impurity by any worldly considerations; it is independent.

Krishna-*bhakti* is so powerful and does not care for anything. Jagannātha accepted the offering of that boy who was considered to have the worst fate, a cursed fate. The princess was taken by the Mohammedan, and her issue came in the form of that boy, so he was the "curse of the cursed." But his offering attracted Jagannātha so much.

So, love is wonderfully above everything, surpassing all. Mahāprabhu asked us to accept the path of love, which means giving one's heart, one's self. It is so powerful, nothing else can attract Krishna. He is very greedy to eat this love, this *prema*. He lives on *prema*. He is the Lord of love. That love has its inner existence; it is the inner existence of all of us. He is Love personified, and there is a tinge within us also; and like 'birds of a feather,' love likes love.

Once Mahāprabhu, at the time when He had conquered and captured the Kazi, was leading the *saṅkīrtana* party and was feeling very tired. He came

to Śrīdhar Paṇḍit, the poor *brāhmaṇa* who used to sell plantains in the market to somehow meagerly earn his livelihood. Śrīdhar Paṇḍit had a well, and nearby an iron pot which he used for drawing water. Mahāprabhu began to drink water from the well with that pot, which had been left outside. All the devotees objected, "What are You doing? This pot is always kept outside and is very dirty. We are bringing a clean pot for Your drinking water!" Mahāprabhu ignored them and continued drinking water from that iron pot. He commented, "This is the pot of My devotee Śrīdhar; it is purer than anything."

In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says:

api cet sudurācāro, bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ, samyag vyavasito hi saḥ
(Bhagavad-gītā 9.30)

"If a person is an unalloyed devotee who worships Me exclusively, having abandoned all other pursuits based on exploitation and renunciation, even if he commits some abominable action, he is to be considered saintly. He is cent-per-cent pure, because his endeavors are completely on My behalf and his determination is fixed in that resolve."

This is because one who has really surrendered to Krishna is accepted by Him as His own, and such a

surrendered soul should never be considered impure, a transgressor. So, what is *bhajana*? It is a transaction of the heart, not of any formality. In Krishna devotion, Krishna-*bhakti*, the only consideration is the dedication of the heart. Krishna wants that, and not any external formality of the civilized or non-civilized world. In the case of Lord Rāmachandra also, we see that although in the highest consideration He is the director of moral laws, *nīti*, He could not contain Himself when offered something with devotion by an 'untouchable' lady. And that was after she had first taken it herself, after she had taken some sweet. Whatever remained that she considered most tasteful, she kept for Rāma, and He accepted it.

There is another incident that happened in Vidura's house. While Vidura was out collecting alms, Krishna suddenly appeared as a guest at his house. Vidura's wife received Him, but there was nothing to offer, only some bananas. So after seating Him nicely she gave Him that, but she was offering the banana peels to Krishna and discarding the fruit on the ground. She was so bewildered, overwhelmed by the joy of finding that Krishna was suddenly present in her house, that she was discarding the fruit and giving Him the peels, and He was eating them.

At that very moment Nārada and Vidura arrived. Vidura exclaimed: "What are you doing? You are leaving the fruit and giving the peels to my Lord!" But Nārada came to her relief: "She is bewildered, but He who is eating is not at all disturbed! One might think that He would say, 'Oh, give me the fruit. Why are you giving Me the peels?' But He is eating without any concern." Then Krishna answered, "I am eating neither the fruit nor the peels, but I am eating that which is devotion! I am accepting her devotion. Neither the peel nor the fruit can satisfy Me; I need neither the one nor the other, but I live on devotion, Nārada."

patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyaṁ,
yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam,
aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ

(Bhagavad-gītā 9.26)

The Lord says, "I accept all those foodstuffs that are offered; but actually it is not the food itself that I take, rather it is the purpose behind that offering, the ideal. It is the very spirit of the thing I am concerned with and never the outward show. I am living in the inner world, so with food also it is the inner substance with which I am concerned, not the

external appearance." Therefore it is said, *bhāva-grāhī-janārdanaḥ*, "Lord Janārdana (Krishna) sees the mood of devotion." Devotion does not care for the ordinary rules and regulations of this material world. Still, in our lower condition we are advised to go on with *arcaṇa*, and depending on our stage of realization, what we think to be pure we offer, and what is impure we reject. In the preliminary stage this is necessary for our fortune, but as we advance these external considerations are eliminated and the internal ones are given more and more importance.

There is another story which illustrates this. Vrajen Sil was a big scholar of Bengal, a scholar of philosophy so extraordinary that once after he had delivered a lecture at the World Conference of Philosophy in Rome, the president of the meeting told him, "I took you to be Aristotle!" He was respected as Aristotle, he was such a learned man. He had been a student of Scottish Church College in Calcutta and once was taking an examination there. While in the examination hall, he was given the questions and paper, and began to write his answers. Many questions were there, but he became so engrossed in answering one particular question that he forgot everything else. So deeply engaged

was he in answering this single question that he spent the whole time on it and ignored all the others. When the bell rang and the examination time had expired he was perplexed as to what to do? He had only dealt with one question; but he left his paper and went away.

He was the brightest student of the college, but was thinking that his name could not possibly be on the list of successful candidates because he had only answered one question out of perhaps five or six. But still he was stealthily coming to see if the list of successful candidates had been posted. Then one day he found that his name had appeared at the head of that list. He was perplexed: "How is this? I only dealt with one question and I am at the head of the list; how is it possible?" So he asked the professor, "Sir, I had answered only one question; how then is it possible that you have given me first place?"

"Oh Mr. Sil, your answer is on the level of a research scholar, not an ordinary student, so I gave you first place!"

So, this is like *rāga-marga* where the formal things are all ignored and the substance drawn out. Although normally Mr. Sil should have placed amongst the lowest of those candidates who failed, the Professor

was a judge of a bold type and thought, “Oh, his answer to just one question is of such high quality; this student can never be considered to be a failure.” Rather, he was given the highest position.

So, love is such: it does not care for any formality in its real judgment.

PART TWO

The Way Home

Delusion, Divinity and the Real Devotee

Devotee: Mahārāj, if a devotee falls down and becomes disconnected, is that worse than if he becomes a *sahajiyā*?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Which is better, a poor man or a thief? One had money and lost it; the other is imitating that he is wealthy, by committing wrong. One who is disconnected may be reconnected again soon; but *sahajiyā* means either that he had a real connection with the truth, became disconnected, then chose a wrong path, or that already he is engaged in the wrong path. So which is the better position: not to get the real thing, or to get the wrong thing? Which is superior?

In *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* it is mentioned that in *tamo-guṇa*, the lowest position, one thinks 'A' to be 'B'. In *rajo-guṇa*, there is doubt whether *this* is real, or *that* is real. He cannot ascertain what is true; but to think that 'A' is 'B,' and 'B' is 'A'—that is

the worst kind of error. They are misguided; *sahajiyā* means misguided. They are accepting matter as consciousness, so their position is more detrimental than that of those who have nothing, or who have lost their connection with the real thing. In a similar way, the conclusion of the *māyāvādī* section who think that 'merging' into formless *brahma* is the highest end, is more dangerous, because "a half truth is worse than a lie."

se du'yer madhye viṣayī tabu bhālo
māyāvadī saṅga nāhi māgi kona kāla

(Śaraṇāgati 27.3)

Association with those who are out-and-out sense enjoyers can never be so detrimental to one's spiritual welfare as is the company of an impersonalist.

If one man admits "I have no money," and another, who really has no money, shows some counterfeit currency and claims "this is money," then his condition is worse because he is engaged in falsehood.

So to become a *sahajiyā* is worse. He is deceived, his attention is captured by, engrossed in, a wrong conception. One person had some conception for some time and became disconnected, but he may

again easily reestablish his connection, but the other has become captivated by a wrong conception, so to convince him of the truth is more difficult because his mind is possessed and captured by that prejudice. The first person has no engagement; the engagement he had is gone. But the second has mistaken one thing for another. He has taken matter to be divine, and that is worse.

Once, in my childhood, I heard this example from my teacher in school. He said that in America there is a school of music, and if anyone had some knowledge of music, to attend that school he had to pay double the normal fee, but those who had no musical knowledge only had to pay the standard fee. That is because they do not know anything, so they can be taught easily; but the others who had some knowledge of music had to pay double, because everything which they had previously learned would first have to be forgotten, and only then would they be allowed to start learning in the proper way. They had to be taught first to forget their previous prejudices, their misconceptions of musical science, so for them there was a double charge. It is something like that. In one case, no *bhakti*, no devotion; and in the other, in the name of devotion, some non-devotional

thing has captured the man. That is imitation, and worse, it is offensive. Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākur said it is *vancanam*, to ridicule the devotees—Mahāprabhu, Rūpa, Sanātana—it is to ridicule them because it confuses what is *prema* and what is *kāma*. They are at opposite ends; and to accept *kāma* in the name of *prema* is not only heinous and injurious to oneself, but it contaminates the whole atmosphere. So Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says:

kāme preme dekho bhāi, lakṣaṇete bheda nāi,
tabu kāma 'prema' nāhi hoy,
tumi ta' barile kāma, mithyā tāhe 'prema'-nāma
āropile kise śubha hoy

keno mana, kāmere nācāo prema prāya
carma-māṁsamaya-kāma, jaḍa-sukha abirāma,
jaḍa-biṣayete sadā dhāy

(Kalyāṇa Kalpataru 18-19)

"Just give your attention to this, my brother: lust and love, their symptoms may appear as similar; still, lust is not love. But you have accepted lust in place of love, and if you give the certificate, that 'this is *prema*,' by this mistake you only cheat yourself. By mistaking one thing for another

in this way, you will never get anything auspicious. Lust is concerned with flesh and blood, but love is in the highest position of spiritual existence."

So they are opposites, like the South Pole and the North Pole. One is concerned with this body, the other, with the Supersoul; a great gulf lies between them! There is the ocean of dedication, and the highest point of that dedication is *gopī-prema*. It only exists where Krishna is, and here there is only imitation.

koṭi-mukta-madhye 'durlabha' eka kṛṣṇa-bhakta

(Śrī Chaitanya-Charitāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 19.148)

"Out of many millions of liberated persons, a pure devotee of Krishna is very difficult to find." We must consider all these things. Such dedication is possible only in the highest position of spiritual existence, the conscious area which is all-spiritual, and is not in any way concerned with flesh and blood. It is not concerned with the body.

The most heinous thing is that one will play the part of Krishna and a lady will play the part of a *gopī* and they will unite, and in that way they will enjoy. To think *this* to be *that*, it is impossible. Any ordinary moral man will hate this. What to speak of the higher devotees, even an ordinary moral man will hate it.

The steps are shown to us:

adau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ
(Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhuḥ 1.4.15)

In the beginning is faith, then association with devotees, engagement in service, purging of faults, attainment of steadiness in devotion, spiritual taste, firm attachment, transcendental emotion and pure love of Krishna. These are the steps.

And from another standpoint:

vaikuṇṭhera pṛthivy-ādi sakala cinmaya
(Śrī Chaitanya-Charitāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 5.53)

"The earth, water, fire, air and ether of Vaikuṇṭha are all spiritual."

We must always remember this: "I am the offspring of *taṭastha-śakti*, the marginal potency; that is where I was born, and I must go through *svarūpa-śakti*, which is higher than me. There the soil is of higher stuff than that of which I myself am made. The earth, the air, the water, the trees, birds, everything there is superior to me. And I am to enter there? It is not a small thing, not an easy thing. It is not within the power of the person who wants to go there to enter, rather it is completely

dependent on the grace of his superiors: *guru-kṛpā, vaiṣṇava-kṛpā*.

We have to walk there on our head, not on our feet. All are guru; the soil is guru, the entire paraphernalia is guru, superior. I am made of a lower stuff, and that plane is of higher substance, so it is impossible to enter there at my sweet will. To approach that direction as far as *mukti*, liberation, may be easy, but thereafter we can only be drawn by their grace; it is not a matter of right that anyone can enter that realm. It is only the wholesale, cent-per-cent grace of a child of that soil which can take us there. Just as in court there is a guarantor, someone who stands as a guarantee for the subject, so some agent of that soil must take responsibility for me, and at his risk, I can go. Vaiṣṇava and guru, children of that soil, they will take the risk and bring me there. So without their grace, *vaiṣṇava-kṛpā, guru-kṛpā, bhāgavata-kṛpā*, we cannot enter there.

No right—all grace. That grace can take me there. From our side, we have no right. I am a child of the marginal potency, but there the whole substance, everything, is made of a higher stuff than my own existence. I have my existence as a person, and there they are also all persons, but all there are of an existence superior to me. How then can this person stand

on the head of those? Only for their service; otherwise, it is inconceivable and impossible. Even to accept this principle is most difficult, what to speak of entering there:

bahūnāṁ janmanām ante, jñānavān māṁ prapadyate vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti, sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ

(Bhagavad-gītā 7.19)

"After many births, one who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me (Vāsudeva) realizing that it is I who am both the source and substance of all that be. Such a great soul is extremely rare."

And *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states:

muktānām api siddhānāṁ nārāyāṇa-parāyaṇaḥ sudurlabhaḥ praśāntātmā koṭiṣv api mahā-mune

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.14.5)

"O great sage, out of many millions of souls who are liberated and free from ignorance, and out of many millions of *siddhas* who have nearly attained perfection, there is hardly one pure devotee of Nārāyāṇa. Only such a devotee is completely satisfied and peaceful."

It is easy to think of, but hard to attain! No right can be established there; it is not as a matter of right that we can go there, so the 'right-seeker' will be

totally frustrated. We must be prepared for "all risk, no gain." But if somehow we can reach there, it will be "all gain, no risk!"

So to become a Vaiṣṇava proper is almost impossible. It is only as a matter of grace from that level that we can go there; there is nothing we can do from our side. Only with complete surrender, complete self-forgetfulness, complete dedication to the interest of that place, can we hope to be taken there:

vaikuṇṭhera pṛthivy-ādi sakala cinmaya
māyika bhūtera tathi janma nāhi haya

(Śrī Chaitanya-Charitāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 5.53)

"The earth, water, fire, air and ether of Vaikuṇṭha are all spiritual. Material elements are not found there."

Uddhava is a devotee of such quality that he prays: "If I can be a creeper there, I shall consider my fortune to have reached its highest extent." In Vṛndāvan the creeper is such a valuable thing that Uddhava—about whom the Lord says, "You are My most favorite devotee; I love you even more than My own Self"—he is aspiring to take such a birth that will give him that position there. This is not mere hyperbole. When Uddhava is aspiring

to be a shrub, to be some grass there, then how are we to prepare ourselves, that we shall walk over that place? I shall have to walk over the head of Uddhava? So, how much higher a conception must that place be?

And the *sahajiyās*—ridiculous! By imitation, here in the plane of flesh and blood, they think they will achieve that. They are the worst enemies, because by imitating in this way not only are they themselves going to hell but they are attracting so many others there also. They are not conscious of the facts, of what is what. So they have got their hated position in society; the general society has got hate for them, those '*bābājīs*.'

But we have to put faith in our *Guru Mahārāj* who said, "It is my misfortune. I could not find a single Vaiṣṇava in this *Vraja-maṇḍala*." Pressing his hand to his forehead he said, "It is my misfortune that I could not find a single Vaiṣṇava in this great, holy place of *Vraja-maṇḍala*." That was his conclusion.

And after he had performed *Vraja-maṇḍala-parikramā*, he said about one *bābājī* who was generally recognized as the best of the *sahajiyā* 'Vaiṣṇavas,' as their leader: "He is a *kaniṣṭha*

adhikārī. He may be considered as a beginner, to have admission into the infant-class." That man was considered unanimously as a *siddha-bābājī*, to have attained the highest position among them, but Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura said, "He has got admission into the primary class." In writing, in the *Gauḍīya-patrikā* newspaper, he stated this. And we are trained accordingly, and consciously, not with blind faith. He explained to us what is what; we tried to follow his directions, and we have also come to such conclusions.

Step by step we must approach the highest point. It is not mental concoction, imitation. Imitation is the worst. It is hateful, filthy. If in the name of that higher love we represent this fleshy connection with the body and the mind—then that is the most hateful thing. We must try to avoid it with our utmost will and energy.

Śrīla Kavirāja Goswāmī describes: *vaikuṇṭhera pṛthivy-ādi sakala cinmaya*, that the elements of that Vaikuṇṭha world are all-spiritual and the scientific survey of that land is possible to our soul's eye. We must understand that, how it is true. And for that we must first understand what is the *taṭastha* region: what is *virāja*, what is *brahmaloka*.

But we are in such a material position that we cannot even understand this lower process:

indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur, indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ
manasas tu parā buddhir, buddher yaḥ paratas tu saḥ

(Bhagavad-gītā 3.42)

What is our soul? We can't follow, we can't understand what our own soul is! There is the world; we conceive it, we perceive it through our senses, so they are higher. The mind receives experience of the world through the senses, above the mind is the faculty of judgment within us, and above that is the soul proper. And then we approach the Supersoul area; through *virāja, brahmaloka*, eventually we reach Vaikuṇṭha. There are so many layers to cross, but who is to cross, our own soul, we cannot even find him! We are far away from that conception, in a hopeless position, and we say that the highest conception of the Paramātmā-world is in our fist! That is foolish.

First we must feel our own soul, what is our real existence and identity in the spiritual position; then that soul will have to go higher and higher; by crossing more and more valuable planes he must go up. But first he must feel his own identity.

So, the *sahajiyās*, the imitationists, should be considered as the enemy. Like Quisling*, they are *jana-śatru*, the enemy who has sprung up at home, the enemy within. This kind of imitation is the worst. Ordinary imitation may be bad, but imitation of the highest reality is completely repugnant and must be rejected because what is Supreme is being exploited in such a low, mean way. *That* is *sahajiyā*.

We cannot see our own soul! That is our position. Absorbed in this gross matter of exploitation, we cannot even know what is our mind, of what substance it is made. Then, how can one understand what is the intelligence, *buddhi*, the faculty of judgment with us; or beyond that, the soul; or ultimately, the realm of the Supersoul? But we are living in this mundane world and imagining: "I have got the Lord of my dreams!"

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*Quisling was an influential Norwegian army officer during the Second World War who was in league with the enemy, the Nazi occupational force.

Transcendental Knowledge

Sometimes we may be misguided to believe that we must not study the devotional books, thinking: "To analyze, to know, that is not part of devotion. That is not necessary; it is knowledge, *jñāna*, and that is anti-devotion." Thinking in this way we will go on taking the Holy Name, and wherever there is some explanation being given about the devotional school, we will try to avoid it. But that is not always best, because by hearing from the proper source we get the kind of knowledge that gives us impetus to go on in our *sādhana*.

In *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta* Śrīla Krishnadās Kavirāja Goswāmī says: *siddhānta baliyā*, we should discuss the *siddhānta* (perfect conclusions of devotion). Sanātana Goswāmī is the *āchārya* of *siddhānta*.

One may say, "What is the necessity of knowing *siddhānta,* what is what? I shall go on chanting the Name and wherever there is any class being given to explain *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* or *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta* I shall avoid it. That is all knowledge: *jñāne*

prayāsam udapāsya. "One should totally abandon the unnecessary endeavor of gaining knowledge by discussing empirical philosophical truths." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.14.3*)

But the *jñāna* mentioned in this verse does not describe that sort of knowledge which gives us a real conception of what is the devotee, and what is God. That 'knowledge' appears similar to *jñāna* externally, but if it is coming from a genuine source; it is of another type, another substance.

The warning about *jñāna* is given because *anyone* may give *any* kind of interpretation of the revealed scriptures. It is not that we should try to know anything and everything, that whatever anyone will say, we will run there to learn something. But when there is any revelation coming through a real agent who is higher than us, we should be very earnest to hear; that will consolidate our position and help us to go on, to progress in our *sādhana*.

We should not reject as 'knowledge' that *siddhānta*: who is Krishna and how He is *Svayam Bhagavān*; who is Nārāyāṇa; where are the twenty-four layers of misconception*; where is Vaikuṇṭha,

* twenty-four elements by which the *baddha-jīva* (conditioned soul) is covered.

Goloka; who is Baladeva; what are all the different *rasas*. If I say, "Oh, no, this is all *jñāna*; dismiss it, and take the Name," that is foolishness. It should be considered as indolence, or idleness. We should invite that knowledge which will enhance our faith more profoundly. One should welcome such discussions. The Lord Himself says:

mad cittā mad-gata-prāṇā, bodhayantaḥ parasparam
kathayantaś ca māṁ nityaṁ, tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca

(Bhagavad-gītā 10.9)

"The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss always enlightening one another and conversing about Me."

So, in the association of the *sādhus*, to discuss about Him from different standpoints is not 'knowledge' to be abandoned; rather it should be spontaneously and naturally encouraged. It is called *iṣṭha-goṣṭhi*: *goṣṭhi* means "combination" and *iṣṭha*, "desirable company." In that association we must talk about Him. That is a necessary part of devotion.

And when *bhāva-bhakti* (true devotional feeling) awakens, automatically these things will come:

kṣāntir avyartha-kālatvaṁ viraktir māna-śūnyatā
āśā-bandhaḥ samutkaṇṭhā nāma-gāne sadā ruciḥ
āsaktis tad-guṇākhyāne prītis tad vasati-sthale
ityādayo 'nubhāvāḥ syur jāta-bhāvāṅkure jane

(Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhuḥ 1.3.25-26)

"When the seed of ecstatic emotion for Krishna fructifies in the heart of the devotee, the following symptoms naturally manifest in his behavior: he feels forbearance; he doesn't like to waste any time; he is detached from the mundane; he is free from pride; he lives in full hope; he is always eager to serve; he always has a taste for chanting the Lord's Name; he loves to tell of the Divine qualities of the Lord; and he loves the Holy Abode of the Lord. These nine are called *anubhāva*, subordinate signs of ecstatic love."

If a *sādhu* spontaneously out of his own accord is expressing so many qualities of Krishna, and we go away, losing the benefit of that—it is suicidal! Rather, we need attachment for that, *āsaktiḥ*. "Oh, the good qualities of Krishna are being explained through this agent; I must try to give my ear to that." Otherwise, why has the ear been created? It has been created only to receive tidings of Him! The ear and the brain have been created for that purpose

only, and both must have their fulfillment in *Krishna-kathā, hari-kathā*.

For what purpose is the *Gītā* there, the *Bhāgavata*? What is *māyā*? What is *svarūpa-śakti*? What is real knowledge and what is misconceived, apparent 'knowledge'? All these things we must know to a certain extent, because to avoid what is undesirable and to accept what is desirable presupposes some sort of knowledge at every step of our progress.

So, *jñāne prayāsam udapāsya*, to abandon fruitless knowledge-seeking does not mean we must not talk about Krishna amongst ourselves, or that when a *sādhu* is explaining about the Lord's *nāma, rūpa, gūṇa, līlā* (Names, Forms, Qualities and Pastimes) we should flee from that place! It is not like that. By *jñāna*, in the sense used here, is meant the teachings of the *sāṅkhyā* of the atheist Kapila, the schools of Patañjali (yoga), Jaimini (*karma-mimaṁsa*), the Buddhist school, etc.; and the advice to avoid them is also meant for the beginner, but the preacher will have to come into contact with everything—to smash them.

And also sometimes *jñāna*, knowledge which is necessary, can come from within. There is a stage of

devotion when the necessary knowledge comes from within, automatically. There is a stage of *bhakti* where things occur in this way; it is revelatory, through revelation we can understand. Without any study but being supplied internally by *caitya-guru* (the Lord as our inner guide), sometimes knowledge of devotion may come to us; but generally it will be by hearing from the lips of the devotees.

So the plane, the conception of Krishna in Vṛndāvan, is not lacking in *cit*, in knowledge. *Cit* means *cetana*, that is, consciousness, to know. It is not in want of grandeur and awe, such as is found in Vaikuṇṭha. But when *ānanda* (joy, ecstasy) takes precedence over *cit*, then it is advised, "Don't endeavor much through knowledge." There is *sat-cit-ānandam* (eternity, knowledge and bliss) and by *cit*, by the faculty of knowing and understanding, we cannot achieve everything. But everthing comes automatically to us by service. In service, there is also knowledge, a department of knowledge, and that develops automactically.

The Sweetest Struggle

Devotee: Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, some time ago I was told that if one is not struggling in Krishna-consciousness it is not a good thing. Should that be the condition of someone who is striving to be Krishna-conscious, that he is struggling?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: When a devotee is trying conquer his senses; when he is trying to conquer the influences of *kāma, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, mātsarya* (lust, anger, greed, madness, illusion and envy), at that time he cannot avoid that struggle. Progress means a struggle, of different kinds, and that happens in the stage of *mādhyama-adhikāra* (the intermediate stage). Generally, that is the time of difficulties. In *kaniṣṭha-adhikāra*, in the lower stage, one does not concern himself with the stage of his progress, or if he is getting devotion or not; with a peaceful mind he is engaged in *arcana* (deity worship), or whatever may be his service. But when the stage of *mādhyama-adhikāra* begins, real struggle

begins in one's life. He will have to adjust many things, *laukikī vaidhikī vāpi*, not only regarding his devotional life, as advised by the scriptures (*vaidhikī*), but also his social position (*laukikī*), his ordinary dealings, his quarrels, his relationships with society, with education.

Generally the tendency to preach comes in this stage; he wants to extend himself to try to remove the difficulties in the environment and convert it to his purpose. The *mādhyama-adhikārī*'s life is one of struggle. And when he reaches *uttama-adhikāra* (the advanced stage of realization) then he becomes somewhat peaceful in his life. He becomes peaceful; he sees that everywhere things are going well, according to the will of Krishna. He can see the will of Krishna very easily and that His backing is everywhere. So he has not much to do, or struggle for:

sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ
bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmany eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.45)

"One on the topmost platform of devotional service (*uttama-bhāgavata*) sees within everything the Soul of souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Krishna. He sees everything in rela-

tion to the Supreme Lord and understands that everything that exists is eternally situated within the Lord."

But when one is living in the plane of ignorance, of misconception, it is necessary for him to find harmony, because he is seeing both things, *māyā* (illusion) and *īśvara* (the presence of Godhead). He wants to install *īśvara*—God, Godliness, God-consciousness—and he tries his hardest to remove misconception. So, *mādhyama-adhikāra* is a period of struggle; it is in the stage of *sādhana-daśā*, the stage of practice.

As a result of *sukṛti*, spiritual fortune due to devotional service rendered knowingly or unknowingly, the soul first acquires *śraddhā,* divine faith, then *sādhu-saṅgha*, one gets the association of real devotees. That is the stage of hearing, *śravaṇa-daśā*; then *varaṇa-daśā* one accepts the principle, the teachings, the path of devotion; and then comes *sādhana-daśā*, the stage of practice, and this stage is full of struggle. Then, in the *āpana-daśā* stage of advanced realization, one feels peaceful in *bhāva-bhakti*, the first opening of the bud of divine love, which in the stage of *prapanna-daśā,* full surrender, becomes *prema-bhakti*, pure love of God.

And again, when he is already in *līlā,* situated in the transcendental pastimes, there is another struggle, but that is of another kind. In Vraja, Vṛndāvan, there is also competition, a struggle. Yaśodā will think, "How to control this naughty child? I fail to do so; I can't manage Him!" In this way there is struggle, but that is produced by *yoga-māyā*; it is in *prema-bhakti, ahi bhāvati premnā*, and it is dynamic in character, not static. Where the plane is dynamic, there must be struggle; in some way or other it is present as competition in the plane of *līlā*.

In the *sakhya-rasa* there is play where there are two parties; on one side is Krishna, on the other, Balarāma, and each wants to be victorious. That is also a struggle, but it is purely of another kind: it is transcendental play.

In *madhura-rasa* also, several parties are there: Rādhārāṇī's party, Chandrāvalī's party and so many others; and the servitors of each party have to manage for their own interest, the interest of their mistress.

So the dynamic character means a kind of struggle—a sweet struggle. And in this world there is struggle also, but that is bitter. When we have to struggle to remove the nescience and invite the real science, to go from misunderstanding to pure

knowledge, in the beginning that struggle is very bitter. It is not only tasteless, but also sometimes painful. But when we enter the higher realm, the struggle becomes more or less sweet.

Līlā must mean a kind of struggle. There are differences, there is conquering, sometimes they are taking the help of deception—one party is deceiving the other—but everything is *āprakṛta, prakṛta-vat*, super-transcendental, though it is appearing just like ordinary worldly affairs.

And so also something like immorality is there; *nīti rahita*, the moral laws are being crossed for the satisfaction of Krishna. This is a very high conception: to do anything and everything for Him. The *kāma-rūpa* group are prepared to do anything and everything for Krishna, and for that kind of service they are under no law. Krishna is the origin and master of law, and for Him anything can be done, crossing the existing law of the society:

ājñāyaivaṁ guṇān doṣān mayādiṣṭān api svakān
dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān māṁ bhajeta sa tu sattamaḥ

(Srīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.11.32)

Those who are ready to cross even the *śastric* orders, which have been given to us for our own

benefit, for the service of Krishna, are really the highest class of devotee. Law, which has been established by the Lord, is for the ordinary people; however, a special section exists who are ready to cross over that law, only for their exclusive service to the Lord.

sarva-dharmān parityajya, mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo, mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ

(Bhagavad-gītā 18.66)

"Totally abandoning all kinds of religion, surrender exclusively unto Me. I will liberate you from all kinds of sins, so do not despair."

Many rules and rites of *varnāśrama-dharma* are given for our benefit, but that is when we are in a lower stage. And in the higher stage, "crossing the law, I shall serve Him"—that is faith!

Suppose it is forbidden to enter the harem of the king; the general law states that it is forbidden to all, and none should transgress that. But if one perceives some urgent service is necessary, if he suspects there is some danger to the king's life, then perhaps he will cross the law at his own risk and enter the harem, for the benefit of the king, to save him. So there is a particular section of

devotees who are ready to cross over the law for the Lord's satisfaction.

Those who can know the interest of Krishna are a special group; they are highest among the devotees. Law is meant for the general public, but the sweet will of Krishna is above all law.

So everywhere there is struggle: where there is life, there is struggle. Where there is progress there is struggle; and where there is *līlā*, play, there is struggle, though of a different kind. One is sweet, the other painful. In the lower stage it is a little painful for us to cut the tie of attraction to this world; but when some permanent relationship is established with the upper world, when we have regained that, then to move forward is happy. Since progress means a struggle, that struggle will continue throughout the whole stage of *madhyama-adhikāra*.

Then, in *uttama-adhikāra* (the stage of advanced devotion) externally the life may become peaceful. And again, in the higher stage, in *vilāsa* (pastimes), crossing *śanta-rasa* (passive appreciation and adoration) which is a peaceful stage, again the struggle begins, but that is a sweet struggle. It is arranged not by *mahā-māyā*, but by *yoga-māyā*; it is carrying us to the center. The very land there is of *rasa*; it is

rasamaya, full of sweet taste, the land of nectar, *amṛtamaya-loka*. The difference between the two kinds of struggle is something like the experience of a man working in a hot desert or in a good, healthy atmosphere, or the work of a diseased man and that of a healthy man. It is like that.

There is also an expression: "ignorance is bliss." One who is in ignorance is living in peace, because he does not know anything; he is unconscious. That is also peaceful; because there is no consciousness, there is no pain. When a patient is in pain the doctor wants to render him unconscious by some injection, and to keep him in that state, because if he awakes he will experience so much pain, acute pain. So, it is necessary that he be placed in another state, unconsciousness.

That unconsciousness is ignorance, and it also has a kind of taste, *tamo-guṇa*. But that is not real peace. There is no feeling, it is zero. But zero is also of an infinite character. Infinity and zero are similar. If we add zero to zero it comes to zero, and if we subtract zero from zero it is also zero; zero divided by zero, again zero. In the same way, if infinity is added to, subtracted from or divided by infinity, it all comes to infinity.

So, "ignorance is bliss." If there is no consciousness, there is no question of pain. It is like the existence of a stone. The extreme liberationists reach such a stage as that of a fossil or a stone. They want peace, so they are given a stone-like state of peace:

ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vīmukta-māninas
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa paraṁ padaṁ tataḥ
patanty adho 'nādṛta-yuṣmad aṅghrayaḥ

(Srīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.2.32)

"O lotus-eyed Lord, although non-devotees who accept severe penances and austerities to achieve the highest position may think themselves liberated, their intelligence remains impure. They simply speculate in various ways and do not seek the means to take shelter of You. Because they have no regard for Your lotus feet, they simply fall down from their position of imagined superiority into material existence again."

To those who are determined to be 'one' with Him, this heavy punishment is at last given, and they are thrown down to take such an existence, that of a stone, and in that way they can live in peace for *lakhs, crores*, or millions of years. They can become a

Himalaya, a stone, or a tree. In the *Purāṇas* we find examples of personalities who were cursed to such a fate; and in that state there also is a sort of peace: "ignorance is bliss."

And those who have gone up to *śanta-rasa*, they also find some peace. But entering Vaikuṇṭha, again there is life, movement, and that is for service. In *dāsya-rasa* there is activity, there is struggle. They are serving the order: "Do this, go here, give this to them." There is so much movement, and movement means struggle, but that struggle gives peace. That kind of struggle begins in *dāsya-rasa*. And *śanta-rasa* is the marginal position, and in that position of nonactivity there is also peace, but it is of a lower quality:

ātmārāmas ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīṁ bhaktim ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ

(Srīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.7.10)

"All varieties of *ātmārāmās* (those who take pleasure in the *ātmā* or spiritual self), especially those established on the path of self-realization, though freed from all kinds of material bondage, desire to render unalloyed devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead. This means that the Lord

possesses transcendental qualities and therefore can attract everyone, including even liberated souls."

That is the marginal position, it is only on the threshold of service proper:

brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām

(Bhagavad-gītā 18.54)

"The spotlessly purehearted and self-satisfied soul who has attained to his conscious divine nature neither grieves, nor craves for anything. Seeing all beings equally (in the conception of My supreme energy), he gradually achieves supreme devotion, *prema-bhakti*, unto Me."

So the marginal position is a position of so-called peace. But we find dynamic peace in struggle, as it appears externally in *dāsya, sakhya* and *vātsalya-rasas,* and in *madhura-rasa* and its sub-divisions, *svākīya* and *pārakīya*. Suppose the *madhura-rasa* servitors are to meet with Krishna on a dark night in the forest; on the surface it appears they have to struggle in so many ways. Being given the sign, hearing the particular flute-song of Krishna, they

will have to pass through the jungle to be somewhere, at a particular time. That appears like an ordinary struggle, but it is the sweetest movement.

If 'struggle' means 'movement,' then there, on that plane, where movement is so sweet, struggle is a high thing. But if we think that struggle means something painful, then that struggle must be of the lower plane. Here it is pain-producing; all movement, all endeavor here produces only pain. On the higher plane, there is also movement, but that movement produces sweetness, just as sandalwood when rubbed produces a sweet scent. There is struggle for the purpose of producing sweetness.

So there on the highest level they are also very busily struggling, but that struggle is producing nectar, which they are tasting. To struggle also means to be busy; everyone there is so busy, more than we can ever conceive. They are so active, but their activity is not painful; it produces peace. Here, trying to do away with our unholy attraction to the mundane, we experience a painful struggle. But, as the English poet Shelley wrote: "Our sweetest songs tell of saddest thought." That kind of struggle also gives us peace. When a beginner in devotion starts to become detached from his mundane

environment, to leave it is painful, but he also gets a kind of peace:

yad anucarita-līlā-karṇa-pīyūṣa-vipruṭ
sakṛd adana-vidhūta-dvandva-dharmā vinaṣṭāḥ
sapadi gṛha-kuṭumbaṁ dīnam utsṛjya dīnā
bahava iha vihaṅgā bhikṣu-caryāṁ caranti

(Srīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.47.18)

A devotee leaves his family, and his family is crying and wailing; he also feels pain because of their anguish. But still he feels a kind of peace of a higher quality, so he can bear the apparent pain of separation from his family life. When he is giving up his home and his family, he feels some painful reaction, but beyond that, in his heart of hearts, he feels some bright prospect. When a man goes to a foreign country to earn some money, he leaves his family and so he feels some pain, but at heart he also realizes that he is going to bring in money which will satisfy him, and enable him to enjoy.

In a similar way, when a person goes to leave this world, his association with misconception, apparently, or outwardly, he feels pain on account of what he is doing, but at heart he gets some hope of a bright future, and with that strength he can go on.

So, when we have some attraction for this mischievous world, and we try to leave it, at that stage we struggle—a painful struggle. But still, beyond that we see a bright hope of some unparalleled nectarean taste of life.

So struggle does not always mean pain. Up to a certain stage it is painful, and that is due to *māyā*, misconception. And we find also the symptoms of pain in Krishna-*līlā*, but that is not really pain. It is apparent pain; it only seems so. Krishna said that He would come to a particular *kuñja* (forest bower) and Rādhārāṇī with Her party went there, but He did not come. That is called *kalahāntaritā*, mistiming, that is, being let down by the lover or beloved; and there are so many other situations, like *māna* (jealousy), etc. All these things are painful, but as Krishnadāsa Kavirāja Goswāmī writes, describing Krishna-*prema*: *bāhye viṣa-jvālā haya, bhitare ānanda-maya*, externally there appears to be great pain, but the heart is overflowing with blissfulness. So, "Our sweetest songs are those which tell of saddest thought." Externally it is sad, but internally, it is sweet. It is like that.

When we take the Name, in the beginning we think it our duty to count so many rounds, and sometimes it

is painful. But when we get a taste for the Name, then our inner tendency incites us to take the Name more and more—not that as a duty we will somehow have to finish sixteen rounds. But when we acquire *ruci*, inner taste for that particular service, it is happy. Until and unless we acquire that position, there must be some pain.

As long as we do not have that taste and we are doing that service as a duty, we will feel some pain. So *sādhana-daśā* is a little painful, on the whole. Then in *āpana-daśā* it becomes sweet. Underground, of course, sweetness is everywhere; otherwise why should a person be tempted to approach the spiritual path? Only for the hope of sweetness. But still, if we want to see by analysis, then the process is: *śravana-daśā,* hearing; then *varana-daśā,* accepting; then *sādhana-daśā,* practicing. Up to this point it is a little painful. Then *āpana-daśā*, realized devotion; and finally *prapanna-daśā*, full self-surrender. And what pain exists is only apparent; substantially it is all sweet.

Heart and Halo

The prejudice of our past experience, caught within us in a subtle form, has covered, like dust, the eye of our soul. Our inner vision is densely covered with the dust of many different misconceptions of separate interest, causing us to ignore the universal interest.

This mental cover is made up of the prejudices of local and provincial interest, and it keeps us from seeing reality: *viṣaya-dhūlite kemane se paratattva pāiye dekhite*. How will a person be able to read the universal wave when his mind is fully engrossed with local interest of different kinds? How can one detect the universal interest, the universal wave? Only one who has fully eliminated all kinds of local interest, and is eager to understand the universal wave, can see it clearly.

Aṛtheṣv abhijñaḥ svarāṭ: what is the purpose of the movement of this world? The answer is clear: "For itself." Reality is for itself; not to satisfy many, but to satisfy One. All the waves are meant to

satisfy that One, and if we can put ourself on that level we can understand the truth; otherwise we are all cheaters.

We are far from the truth when we cannot see that everything, all waves are flowing towards the satisfaction of One, *svayam bhagavān*. We are laboring under a deception; we are deceivers who are not just deceiving ourself but the world also. We are guilty of misunderstanding everything and of carrying that false knowledge to others. Everyone, all the *baddha jīvas,* are more or less cheaters. That is our position and we must be relieved of such misunderstanding, such deception of our own self as well as of the environment, if we are to be placed in our proper position.

Then we can go there and find that universal wave, see it: *darśan*. *Darśan* means 'to see,' and how to see, that must be learned. What to see, how to read what is going on, in myself and outside, that is proper understanding and proper education. A proper understanding of one's own self and also of the environment is proper education. Education must be Vedic. The standard must be drawn from outside this area of *māyā*, misunderstanding; it must be drawn from the perfect realm through *veda*, revealed truth.

We must accept revealed truth and bid farewell to

so-called scientific knowledge and other kinds of perceptions, which are all erroneous, based on false experience and false information. "It belongs to me; it belongs to him; it belongs to them": this calculation is all false. So we have to be relieved, we have to get wholesale relief from this mania, this misconception. And not only must we get relief from the misconception, from misunderstanding the external waves, but we must attain a positive position, to learn to understand the wave, the vibration of Goloka. Goloka is the most universal, most fundamental plane, and if we can harmonize ourself with that plane we will be led to Vṛndāvan, or Nabadwīp, and there we shall see things as they are.

Some are more attracted to Krishna-*līlā*, others more towards Nabadwip-*līlā*, and others have an inclination to be accommodated in both places. In Krishna-*līlā* also some are attracted to Rādhārāṇī's camp, some to Krishna's camp and some are holding the middle position. We find this sort of division, and that is necessary for the *līlā,* by the arrangement of *yoga-māyā*. So, in the highest plane, we find two kinds of pastimes, Krishna-*līlā* and Gaura-*līlā*, and they are of the same value. In one there is transaction within a 'limited' camp and in the other there is

transaction, along with a tendency towards distribution to others. But they are of the same value. That which is being distributed, and that which is being enjoyed are of one and the same value of ecstasy, sweetness, love and beauty. Some are more attracted to the one *līlā*, some to the other.

Within Gaura-*līlā* also, we find those like Narahari Sarkara and his followers, who were more given to Krishna than Gaurāṅga, and others who are more inclined towards Gaurāṅga than to Krishna. This is all by the grant of the Lord, the Supreme will—His *līlā*.

In Gaura-*līlā,* Gadādhar Paṇḍit is holding the helm, everything belongs to him; still he has to admit he's dispossessed, that Gaurāṅga has taken everything! He is exhaustively dedicated to Gaurāṅga. So Śrīla Kavirāja Goswāmī says: *teho lakṣmī-rūpā, tāra sama keha nāi,* that he represents the main potency of Gaurāṅga, and no one is to be compared with him. This is the conclusion of Śrīla Kavirāja

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*In the *Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* purports by Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swāmī (*Ādi-līlā*, 10.15) it is stated that Śrīla Gadādhar Paṇḍit, the fourth branch of the Chaitanya tree, is the combination of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Lalitā-sakhī. In the Pañca-Tattva, Śrīla Gadādhar Paṇḍit represents the internal potency or pleasure potency of the Lord. (*continued on next page*)

Goswāmī about Śrī Gadādhar. He is *gaura-prema-maya*, the embodiment of Śrī Gaura's love.

Gadādhar Dās represents the halo of Rādhārāṇī, but Gadādhar Paṇḍit represents Her mood, Her nature—Her heart.* It is as if Mahāprabhu has taken away Gadādhar Paṇḍit's soul, and the body is still standing! That is the position of Gadādhar Paṇḍit; he is quite empty, and following Mahāprabhu. He is not full in himself. Something, the most important thing, his heart, has been taken by Mahāprabhu, so he has no other alternative but to follow Him. He is wholly given to Mahāprabhu. Gadādhar Paṇḍit's position, the part he played, was something like that of Rādhārāṇī, Her heart stolen by Krishna, the empty body still standing. *Rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-subalitaṁ naumi Kṛṣṇa-svarūpam*: He was fully engrossed in the conception of Śrī Gaurāṅga. Gaurāṅga had taken everything from him, so he had no other alternative; he was fully engrossed, captured completely by Him.

In *Ādi-līlā* 10.53, it is explained that Śrīla Gadādhar Dās, the twenty-third branch of the Chaitanya tree, is considered to be a united form of Candrakānti, who is the effulgence of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and Pūrṇānandā, who is the foremost of Lord Balarāma's very dear girlfriends. Thus Śrīla Gadādhar Dās was one of the associates of both Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu.

We find his activity throughout his whole life was like this. Of the other devotees, some were ordered to go to Vṛndāvan, and some were allowed to go there, but though Gadādhar Paṇḍit wanted to visit Vṛndāvan with Mahāprabhu Himself, he was denied: "No, you won't go." When Jagadānanda Paṇḍit asked to go there, Mahāprabhu, with hesitation, granted him permission, "Yes, go there, but move always under the guidance of Rūpa and Sanātana." He also gave him some special instructions: "Do this, and this, and don't do that." But Gadādhar Paṇḍit was not allowed to go there.

He was the representation of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī Herself, yet his peculiar position was such: the Queen of Vṛndāvan, but now transferred to Nabadwīp. His position had become just the opposite; he could not enter Vṛndāvan! He prayed for permission, but Mahāprabhu did not give it. He said, "No, stay and live here." And he had to do so. Śrī Gadādhar Paṇḍit represents the predominated moeity of the Whole. The Whole consists of predominating and predominated moeities, and he represents the predominated half. He is one half of the Absolute Truth.

In the teachings of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, whose preaching was inspired by Śrī Gadādhar

Paṇḍit and Śrīman Mahāprabhu, we also find all the substance that is present in that plane of vibration. These two personalities, Śrī Gadādhar Paṇḍit and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur, are our great gurus, our guides, and by offering our worship to them we can sow the seed of our highest benefit. By the grace of that great Guru-Mahārāj Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Prabhupāda, we have been able to understand this.

And Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, though generally he has his own position, as understood from the consideration of the disciple, Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura has seen Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in him: a 'relative' vision. He once said that Rādhārāṇī represents the full play of *aṣṭa-nayikā*, the eight characteristics of the heroine; we see that they are all perfectly represented in Her. In other places we may find partial representations of them, but we find them fully manifest only in Her.

He said, "I see my *gurudeva* as Guṇa-mañjarī, and in that *mañjarī* form he has some partial representation of Rādhārāṇī. But if I attempt to look more deeply, I find him identified fully with Her; the eight kinds of qualities displayed in the service of Krishna (*aṣṭa-nāyikā*) are to be found there. If I look at him

with my head a little more erect, I can see that he is one with Rādhārāṇī. *Ācāryaṁ māṁ vijānīyāt*: know the *Ācārya* as Myself. If I give more attention to this *śāstric* rule and try to search out the meaning, I find that Rādhārāṇī comes to take Her place there, in the position of my *gurudeva*." In this way he has seen in Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura the fullest representation of the cult of Śrī Gaurāṅga.

This realization is expressed in his poem where he says that he saw Svarūpa Dāmodara Goswāmī in Gaura-kiśor Dāsa Bābājī, and Śrī Gadādhar Paṇḍita in Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. In one place he has written: *gadādhara-din dhari' pāiyācche gaura-hari*, that he has accepted the day of the disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to be identified with that of Śrī Gadādhar Paṇḍit. In another place, in his poem at the conclusion of his *Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta* commentary, he has written: "Here, in Nabadwīp-*dhāma*, the eternal pastimes are going on continuously; only those who have got that deep vision can perceive it.

gadādhara mitra-vara, śrī svarūpa damodara,
sadā kāla gaura-kṛṣṇa yaje
jagatera dekhi' kleśa, dhariyā bhikṣuka-veśa,
aharahaḥ kṛṣṇa-nāma bhaje

śrī gaura icchāya dui, mahimā ki kava mui,
aprākṛta pāriṣada-kathā
prakaṭa haiyā seve, kṛṣṇa-gaurābhinna-deve,
aprakāśya kathā yathā tathā

He says, "It is very difficult to perceive the sweet will of Śrī Gaurāṅga, but if we can lift ourselves to that level, we see that Svarūpa Dāmodar Goswāmī and Śrī Gadādhar Paṇḍit are always engaged in their service here in Nabadwīp. Sometimes it is suppressed and sometimes it is appearing on the surface. In that plane all is going on by the sweet will of Śrī Gaurāṅga, without any restriction. But now I find that those two have appeared on the surface as Śrīla Gaura-kiśora Dāsa Bābājī and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. I have seen it with my own eye of divine service but this is not to be advertised, not to be given publicity anywhere and everywhere; people will laugh at it. But this is my heartfelt conclusion." He has written this in his poem concluding *Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta*.

So Gadādhar Paṇḍit was identified with Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. That was the vision of our Gurudeva, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura. He could see in them the same identity. He considered *śikṣa-guru paramparā* to be the most substantial

thing. Eliminating the *sahajiyā-vāda* which gives much importance to the outer cover, try to look within, and see things more deeply. Try to understand the deeper vibrations of the outside environment, and see within yourself also. Dive deep, and you will find the plane of the finest vibration which will carry that news to you, and you will see that truth.

An Invitation to the Reader

Readers interested in the subject matter of this book are invited to correspond with the secretary at the addresses listed below.

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math
Kolerganj, P.O. Nabadwip
District Nadia,
W. Bengal, PIN 741302, India

or

Ananta Printing & Publishing
2900 N. Rodeo Gulch Rd
Soquel, CA 95073

You are also invited to visit the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math on the Internet/World Wide Web at http://www.lcd.com/math/